

**Series 1999-2000**  
**Circular Letter: C-12**

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

DATE: February 25, 2000

SUBJECT: Public School Educator Supply and Demand in Connecticut, Update on Recommendations

In May and June 1999, the State Board of Education discussed the report, *Public School Educator Supply and Demand in Connecticut: A Look Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The report concludes with a series of recommendations to alleviate potential shortages of educators, which requires that we all work together. This letter highlights some of the actions we are taking as a result of the recommendations and includes the partners working together to insure there are adequate numbers of qualified educators in Connecticut.

**State Department of Education**

- Provide information on expected shortage and non-shortage areas.
  - Our report, *Public School Educator Supply and Demand in Connecticut: A Look Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, will soon be available on our web-site. We are also soliciting information on exemplary recruitment, hiring and retention practices from school districts for placement on our web-site.
- Provide information on careers in education.
  - A brochure promoting teaching in Connecticut and identifying shortage areas has been distributed to school counselors, applicants for certification, and higher education institutions.
- Provide information on how to become an educator.
  - For current elementary teachers, and for those certified in elementary education but not currently teaching, we will provide information on how to gain middle or high school certification. In Connecticut, elementary education is not a shortage area; we have many more people certified each year than job openings and many people certified, but not teaching, in the “reserve pool”. Soon, we are going to contact those recently certified but not teaching with information on expected shortages and on how to add middle or high school endorsements, expecting that some may still be interested in a teaching career. We will next contact elementary teachers, and give them the same information. Some may wish to move to higher grades.

- Encourage retired educators to return to the classroom.
  - We have introduced a legislative proposal that would allow retired teachers to return to teaching without the present financial restriction.
- Expand minority recruitment efforts.
  - We have met with deans in Connecticut colleges and universities to discuss on-campus activities to stimulate the interest of minority students in teaching.
  - We will also continue to participate in national efforts to recruit minorities to teaching and disseminate information on recruitment fairs to all our districts.
  - We have hired Dr. Yuhang Rong under a federal grant to spearhead statewide efforts to attract and retain a qualified, diverse teaching force. He can be reached at: [Yuhang.Rong@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Yuhang.Rong@po.state.ct.us).
- Encourage people to pursue careers in administration.
  - We have used some Goals 2000 funding to local districts, regional educational service centers and higher education to develop models to attract highly qualified educators to administration. These models will then be disseminated statewide.
  - We will be establishing a commission to study school leadership in Connecticut that will make a series of recommendations about recruiting and retaining high caliber school leaders.
- Expand alternate route to certification program.
  - We have just established an alternative route program for teachers to add an endorsement in school library media offered through ACES.

### **Local Education Agencies**

- Encourage students to pursue careers in education.
  - We are encouraging service learning, cooperative work experience in schools and school-to-career programs.
  - We also encourage public schools, Pre-K through college, to provide opportunities for students to participate in teaching experiences, such as peer tutoring, cross school and grade tutoring, service learning, and library reading programs.
  - Distribute brochure on teaching as a career to interested students.
  - Create or expand future teacher clubs in middle and high schools.
- Expand minority recruitment efforts.
  - Participate in state, regional and national minority recruitment efforts.

## **Regional Educational Service Centers**

- Provide information on existing openings and provide on-line application.
  - The Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) have created a statewide website (CTREAP) listing district vacancies and providing the ability for candidates to apply for jobs on-line using a standardized application. Districts can post positions and applicants can apply for multiple positions by completing only one application. The state website has a direct link to CTREAP. Information on CTREAP registration is distributed to all graduates of CT teacher preparation programs.
- Encourage students to pursue careers in education.
  - We have received a three-year federal grant to promote teacher recruitment. A portion of the grant initiative includes working with RESCs to promote future teachers' clubs and to coordinate the many district-level initiatives.
  - We are encouraging service learning, cooperative work experience in schools and school-to-career programs.
  - We also encourage public schools, Pre-K through college, to provide opportunities for students to participate in teaching experiences, such as peer tutoring, cross school and grade tutoring, service learning, and library reading programs.
- Provide assistance in filling part-time positions.
  - We have recommended that our regional educational service centers take a leadership role in working with their member districts to fill part-time positions by combining part-time assignments in like subjects in near or adjacent districts to create full-time opportunities.
- Expand alternate route to certification program.
  - RESC directors are discussing offering alternate route to certification programs for cross endorsements in shortage areas such as mathematics and science.

## **Higher Education**

- Expand alternate route to certification program.
  - The Department of Higher Education is working to revamp the current Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program and to add a year-round weekend model focused on bilingual education and other shortage area subjects, such as mathematics, science and world languages.
- Provide flexible scheduling for instruction.
  - Higher education has begun to make more extensive use of technology to offer more courses on-line, at night and on weekends. Central Connecticut State University is exploring offering courses for cross endorsement in mathematics.
  - Information on current loan forgiveness programs and grants for teachers in shortage areas is available on the higher education website: [ctdhe.commnet.edu](http://ctdhe.commnet.edu)

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We are encouraged that we are on the right track, but know we have far to go to make sure that districts have enough highly qualified educators to meet their needs. In order to ensure we have sufficient numbers of qualified educators in our schools, we need to use multiple strategies and work together with many partners. We will continue to monitor supply and demand through our fall hiring report and certification databases, and continue our work in implementing the recommendations of this study. If you would like additional copies of our report, feel free to contact Judith Thompson, Bureau of Program and Teacher Evaluation, at (860) 566-4316, or by e-mail at: [judith.thompson@po.state.ct.us](mailto:judith.thompson@po.state.ct.us).

Thank you.

TSS:jta